

GARY LOCKE
Governor



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Washington State Board of Health and
the Governor's Subcabinet on Health
P.O. Box 47990
Olympia, W A 98504- 7990

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It was a pleasure to meet with representatives of the State Board of Health and Governor's Subcabinet on Health last week. I am returning herewith, with my approval, the 2002 Washington State Health Report.

RCW 43.20.50(1)(b) provides that the State Board of Health shall prepare a report in January of every even-numbered year "that outlines the health priorities of the ensuing biennium." It further stipulates that I must approve, modify, or disapprove the report.

This report clearly articulates the key challenges and opportunities facing state health care agencies and suggests five strategic directions for state health policy:

- maintain and improve access to critical health services;
- improve patient safety and increase value in government-purchased health services;
- bolster the health system's capacity to respond to public health emergencies;
- reduce disproportionate disease burdens among racial and ethnic minority populations; and
- encourage responsible behavior to reduce tobacco use, improve nutrition, and increase physical activities.

I appreciate your collaborative efforts on this document. It will be a useful tool for my office and agency directors as we prepare budgets and request legislation for the 2003-05 biennium.

Sincerely,

Gary Locke
Governor